

## Message Text

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ORIGIN SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 R

DRAFTED BY NEA/AFN:JKBISHOP:PAW  
APPROVED BY THE SECRETARY  
NEA:SSOBER  
S/S-O:SRPVALERGA  
H:RFLATEN  
L/NEA:DSMALL  
AF:WHARROP  
EUR/WE:JDOBBINS  
PM:RERICSON  
NSC:WQUANDT

-----130745 070113Z /62

O 070039Z MAR 78  
FM SECSTATE WASHDC  
TO AMEMBASSY RABAT IMMEDIATE  
INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS IMMEDIATE  
AMEMBASSY PARIS IMMEDIATE  
AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT IMMEDIATE  
AMEMBASSY MADRID IMMEDIATE  
AMEMBASSY JIDDA IMMEDIATE  
AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE  
AMEMBASSY DAKAR IMMEDIATE

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EXDIS

E.O. 11652; GDS

TAGS: MASS, MO

SUBJECT: MOROCCAN ARMS REQUEST

1. AS YOU KNOW, WE HAVE HAD A SERIES OF INFORMAL CONSULTA-  
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TIONS WITH MEMBERS OF CONGRESS ON THE MOROCCAN REQUEST TO  
PURCHASE ARMS THEY HAVE TOLD US WOULD BE USED IN THE  
SAHARA (AND PRESUMABLY MAURITANIA). ALTHOUGH THERE HAS  
BEEN SUPPORT FROM SOME MEMBERS, OUR SAMPLE INDICATES  
THERE WOULD BE A MAJOR CONFRONTATION WITH KEY GROUPS IN  
CONGRESS AND NO GUARANTEE OF SUCCESS SHOULD WE DECIDE TO  
ACCEDE TO THE MOROCCAN REQUEST. CHAIRMAN DIGGS OF THE

HIRC SUBCOMMITTEE ON AFRICA AND DICK CLARKE, HIS COUNTER-PART IN THE SFRC, ARE BOTH FIRMLY OPPOSED, AS IS FRASER. SUPPORT FROM TRADITIONAL FRIENDS OF ISRAEL HAS DECLINED SINCE SADAT'S WITHDRAWAL OF HIS NEGOTIATORS FROM JERUSALEM AND HASSAN'S SUPPORT FOR THAT WITHDRAWAL. A RESOLUTION OF DISAPPROVAL WOULD CERTAINLY BE INTRODUCED, DESPITE A GENERALLY SYMPATHETIC ATTITUDE TOWARD MOROCCO. I FEAR THERE IS A CHANCE SUCH A RESOLUTION WOULD BE APPROVED, GIVEN SENTIMENT AGAINST TRANSFERS OF U.S. ARMS TO AFRICA AND CONCERNS RELATED TO SELF-DETERMINATION. A MAJOR COMPLICATING FACTOR IN COMING MONTHS WILL BE THE CONTROVERSY OVER MAJOR AIRCRAFT SALES, SUCH AS F-15'S FOR SAUDI ARABIA AND F-5'S FOR EGYPT. THERE COULD BE A

BACKLASH IN THIS SITUATION WHICH WE FEAR WOULD FOCUS ON MOROCCAN USE OF U.S. ARMS IN THE SAHARA, INCREASING THE CHANCES FOR DISAPPROVAL.

2. UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES, I HAVE DECIDED NOT REPEAT NOT TO SUBMIT THE ARMS REQUEST TO THE CONGRESS AT THIS TIME. WE WILL, OF COURSE, WISH TO CONTINUE OUR TRADITIONAL MILITARY ASSISTANCE RELATIONSHIP UNDER THE TERMS OF OUR 1960 AGREEMENT. IN THIS RESPECT, IT WILL BE NECESSARY, IN COMMUNICATING OUR NEGATIVE RESPONSE ON THE PURCHASE OF NEW MILITARY EQUIPMENT INTENDED FOR USE IN THE SAHARA, TO REMIND THE GOM THAT THE EQUIPMENT PREVIOUSLY ACQUIRED

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FROM US UNDER THE TERMS OF OUR BILATERAL AGREEMENT IS FOR USE SOLELY FOR THE DEFENSE OF TERRITORY WHICH THE U.S. RECOGNIZES AS UNDER FORMAL MOROCCAN SOVEREIGNTY.

3. I WELL UNDERSTAND THE DISAPPOINTMENT WITH WHICH THE GOM IN GENERAL, AND THE KING IN PARTICULAR, WILL RECEIVE THIS UNWELCOME NEWS. AS FOR OUR PRESENTATION, I UNDERSTAND THAT AT AMBASSADOR BENGELLOUN'S LUNCH ON DECEMBER 3 PRIME MINISTER OSMAN STATED TO YOU THAT THIS PARTICULAR ARMS REQUEST IS ONLY AN ELEMENT IN OUR OVERALL RELATIONS AND WHAT IS REALLY IMPORTANT IS MOROCCAN CONFIDENCE IN THE STRENGTH OF AMERICAN SYMPATHY AND POLITICAL SUPPORT. WHETHER OR NOT OSMAN WAS ACCURATELY PORTRAYING HASSAN'S VIEWS, WE BELIEVE WE SHOULD TAKE OUR CUE FROM OSMAN'S COMMENTS IN OUR DISCUSSIONS WITH MOROCCANS ON THIS SUBJECT. WE SHOULD EMPHASIZE THE POSITIVE, NOTING OUR SUPPORT AND SYMPATHY FOR MOROCCO, OUR DETERMINATION TO CONTINUE TO SUPPORT MOROCCO'S MODERNIZATION PROGRAM, ETC.

4. FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF LETTER TO BOUCETTA WHICH YOU ARE ASKED DELIVER.

QUOTE: DEAR MR. MINISTER: IN THE MONTHS SINCE WE MET IN NOVEMBER THE ADMINISTRATION HAS CAREFULLY CONSIDERED YOUR GOVERNMENT'S INTEREST IN PURCHASING THE OV-10 AIRCRAFT AND COBRA HELICOPTERS FOR USE IN THE WESTERN SAHARA. AS I TOLD YOU AT THAT TIME, THIS REQUEST POSED PROBLEMS FOR US. BECAUSE OF THESE PROBLEMS, WE HAVE HELD INFORMAL CONSULTATIONS WITH THE CONGRESS. I REGRET

TO INFORM YOU THAT ON THE BASIS OF THESE CONSULTATIONS WE DO NOT BELIEVE IT WOULD BE WISE TO MOVE AHEAD WITH THESE PURCHASES AT THE PRESENT TIME.

AS THE PRESIDENT INDICATED TO PRIME MINISTER OSMAN DURING HIS DECEMBER VISIT, THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT PLACES  
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A HIGH VALUE ON ITS RELATIONS WITH MOROCCO, AND WE WELCOME AND ADMIRE THE CONSTRUCTIVE POLICIES FOLLOWED BY HIS MAJESTY IN PURSUIT OF PEACE AND JUSTICE AT HOME AND ABROAD. WE HAVE BEEN PLEASED TO RECEIVE THE ASSURANCES EXPRESSED BY MOROCCAN LEADERS, INCLUDING YOURSELF, OF THE HIGH REGARD THE UNITED STATES ENJOYS IN YOUR COUNTRY. WE ARE HOPEFUL THAT OUR PRESENT INABILITY TO FURNISH WEAPONS FOR USE IN THE WESTERN SAHARA AND MAURITANIA WILL NOT DETRACT FROM THE CORDIAL COOPERATIVE SPIRIT WHICH HAS ANIMATED OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS THROUGHOUT THE REIGN OF HIS MAJESTY.

EXTERNAL INVOLVEMENT IN AFRICA'S AFFAIRS HAS BECOME AS WORRISOME TO US AS IT IS TO YOU. WE APPRECIATE YOUR CONCERN FOR YOUR OWN DEFENSE IN THIS ENVIRONMENT AND, SUBJECT TO CONGRESSIONAL APPROPRIATIONS, WE WILL CONTINUE TO ASSIST YOUR GOVERNMENT TO IMPROVE ITS MILITARY POSTURE IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE TERMS OF OUR MILITARY ASSISTANCE ACCORD. SINCERELY, CYRUS VANCE. UNQUOTE.

5. THE FOLLOWING ARE TALKING POINTS WHICH, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE FIRST, YOU MAY USE AT YOUR DISCRETION WHEN TRANSMITTING MY LETTER:

-- (OBLIGATORY TALKING POINT) THE TERMS OF THE MILITARY ASSISTANCE AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE U.S. AND MOROCCO RESTRICT THE USE OF EQUIPMENT FURNISHED UNDER ITS PROVISIONS TO THE DEFENSE OF THE TERRITORY OF THE KINGDOM OF MOROCCO RECOGNIZED BY THE UNITED STATES. THIS AREA DOES NOT INCLUDE THAT PORTION OF THE WESTERN SAHARA NOW UNDER MOROCCO'S ADMINISTRATIVE CONTROL. NOR DOES THE AGREEMENT AUTHORIZE MOROCCAN USE IN OTHER NATIONS OF EQUIPMENT FURNISHED BY THE U.S. GOVERNMENT.

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-- OUR CONGRESSIONAL CONSULTATIONS REVEALED STRONG OPPOSITION TO THE ARMS PROPOSAL, HEARINGS WERE SCHEDULED BY CRITICS OF MOROCCO, AND WE WERE INFORMED THAT A MOTION OF DISAPPROVAL WOULD HAVE BEEN INTRODUCED HAD WE PROCEEDED WITH THE SALE OF THE OV-10 OR COBRA HELICOPTERS.

-- OUR CONSULTATIONS COINCIDED WITH ADMINISTRATION EFFORTS TO OBTAIN CONGRESSIONAL SUPPORT FOR THE SALE OF AIRCRAFT TO SAUDI ARABIA AND EGYPT. IN VIEW OF THE IMPORTANCE OF THESE SALES TO THE PROSPECTS FOR PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST, AND TAKING INTO CONSIDERATION CONGRESSIONAL OPPOSITION TO ANY EXPANSION OF U.S. ARMS SALES TO AFRICAN AND MIDDLE EASTERN NATIONS, THE ADMINISTRATION DECIDED THIS WOULD BE AN INAPPROPRIATE TIME TO PRESS THE MOROCCAN ARMS REQUEST.

-- THE U.S. IS MORE ACTIVELY PURSUING THE SEARCH FOR A PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT TO THE DISPUTE OVER THE WESTERN SAHARA AND URGED AFRICAN GOVERNMENTS TO ATTEND THE MARCH SUMMIT CONFERENCE ON THE SAHARA.

6. DEPARTMENT WILL BE INFORMING CONGRESS OF THIS DECISION. WE WILL EMPLOY FOLLOWING TALKING POINTS IN FRAMING PRESS GUIDANCE AND SUGGEST YOU DO ALSO:

-- OUR RELATIONS WITH MOROCCO ARE EXCELLENT AND HAVE BEEN ANIMATED BY CLOSE COOPERATION FOR MANY YEARS.

-- OUR DECISION AGAINST AUTHORIZING SALE AT THIS TIME OF THE DESIRED ARMS SHOULD NOT BE INTERPRETED AS INDICATING ANY CHANGE IN OUR FRIENDLY RELATIONS WITH MOROCCO.

-- THIS DECISION DOES NOT ALTER OUR EXISTING ARMS SUPPLY ARRANGEMENTS WITH MOROCCO CONDUCTED UNDER THE TERMS OF OUR BILATERAL ACCORD.

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-- AS FAR AS THE SAHARA DISPUTE IS CONCERNED, TH

## Message Attributes

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**Decaption Date:** 20 Mar 2014  
**Decaption Note:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
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**Review Markings:**  
Sheryl P. Walter  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
20 Mar 2014  
**Markings:** Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014